

Claims

1. A broadcast television programme reminder system for prospective viewers each having, or having access to, a mobile phone, said system comprising a computer connected to a publicly accessible telephone service and adapted to receive SMS messages from said mobile phones, each of said messages requesting a reminder regarding a television programme to be broadcast at a future time, said computer including first storage means into which at least a portion of each said message is stored, and said computer further including a message originating means connected with said first storage means and adapted to send a reply SMS message to the corresponding mobile phone a predetermined time in advance of the future broadcast start time of said television programme for which a reminder had been requested.
2. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said stored portion of said message comprises the telephone number of the originating mobile phone and a G-code or other unique numeric or alpha-numeric code which identifies the television programme for which a reminder was requested.
3. The system as claimed in claim 2 wherein the G-code or other numeric or alpha-numeric codes are accessible to the prospective viewers from billboards, magazines, electronic media or television.
4. The system as claimed in claim 2 or 3 wherein said SMS message includes demographic data regarding the sender of said message and said computer includes a second storage means into which said demographic data is stored.
5. The system as claimed in claim 4 wherein said computer is adapted to analyse the data stored in said second storage means.
6. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein the operator of said publicly accessible telephone service charges said prospective viewer for sending said SMS message from said mobile phone and remits a portion of said charge to the operator of said computer.
7. The system as claimed in claim 6 wherein said telephone service operator does not charge said computer operator for said reply SMS message.
8. The system as defined in paragraph 6 or 7 wherein said telephone service operator charges said prospective viewer for said reply SMS message.

9. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein said reply SMS message includes an advertising component.
10. The system as claimed in claim 9 wherein said advertising component relates to a sponsor of said television show for which a reminder had been requested.
11. The system as claimed in claims 9 or 10 wherein said advertising component relates to a published television programme guide.
12. The system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein television programs is regularly broadcast and the reply SMS message is sent at the predetermined time in advance of each broadcast of the program.
13. The system as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the prospective viewers register with the system by providing predetermined personal details, the predetermined personal details being stored in the first and second storage means.
14. The system as claimed in claim 13 wherein the predetermined personal data is accessible to the computer operator for compiling test audience data including predetermined prospective viewers for use as part of a test audience for a proposed television program.
15. A modification to the system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 14 wherein said prospective viewer uses a fixed phone line, telephones a 1900 prefix number rather than sending an SMS message and receives a recorded message via said fixed phone line instead of said reply SMS message.
16. A broadcast television programme reminder system substantially as herein described with reference to Fig. 2 of the drawings.
17. A method of providing requested reminders to prospective viewers of a broadcast television programme each having, or having access to, a mobile phone, said system comprising the steps of:
 - providing a computer connected to a publicly accessible telephone service, adapting said computer to receive SMS messages from said mobile phones, each of said messages requesting a reminder regarding a television programme to be broadcast at a future time,
 - providing said computer with first storage means and storing therein or at least a portion of each said received message,
 - providing said computer with a message originating means connected with said first storage means, and

sending a reply SMS message via said message originating means to said mobile phones a predetermined time in advance of the future time of said television programme for which a reminder had been requested.

18. A modification to the method claimed in claim 17 wherein said prospective viewer uses a fixed phone line, telephones a 1900 prefix number rather than sending an SMS message and receives a recorded message via said fixed phone line instead of said reply SMS message.
19. A method of providing requested reminders to prospective viewers of a broadcast television programme, said method being substantially as herein described with reference to Fig. 2 of the drawings.